CONTENTS

MARCH, 1924

		PAGE
THE INVASION OF HOLLAND	*Elizabeth J. Coatsworth*	42
"HAISI LATKIS"	*Max Robin*	43
SONNET TO MINNA	*Maxwell Bodenheim*	47
POEMS	*Richard Kirk*	48
NO CHARMS HAVE BOUND ME HERE	*John McClure*	49
SPENT ROCKETS	*Basil Thompson*	49
JOHN DONNE	*Royall Snow*	50
THE MADMAN	*Elizabeth J. Coatsworth*	54
EPIGRAM	*James Feibleman*	54
EMINENCE	*Tupper Greenwald*	55
LIVE OAK AND LION	*Basil Thompson*	57
QUINTESSENTIAL	*Elizabeth J. Coatsworth*	57
RECOMMENDED	*Banbury Cross*	58
A FRENCH FOLLOWER OF ARTHUR MACHEN	*Cuthbert Wright*	59
GEORG KAISER: PIONEER	*Barrett H. Clark*	62
WATER WHEEL TO MEND	*Mark Van Doren*	71
TO AN ANT	*Louis Gilmore*	71
REVIEWS—		
New Hampshire	*John McClure*	72
Stephen Crane Finds His Biographer	*Basil Thompson*	74
The High Place	*Julius W. Friend*	76
Goha The Fool	*N. Bryllion Fagin*	77
Gelatines and Jupes	*Louis Gilmore*	78
Janet March	*Julius W. Friend*	79
TADPOLES	*Laura Benet*	80

Vol. VI No. 32

Copyright, 1923, by *The Double Dealer Publishing Co., Inc.*

The Invasion of Holland

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

The woods are carrying banners
For the coming of the army,
With its four hundred courtesans
On horseback, dressed like princesses,
And its eight hundred courtesans,
On foot, in fine attire.

The hills curve their necks
To see the shining army
And its four hundred courtesans
On their prancing, dancing horses,
And its eight hundred courtesans
On their pretty slippered feet.

The church joins its fingertips
In a prayer for the army
With its four hundred courtesans
Singing hallelujahs,
And its eight hundred courtesans
Kneeling to the Lord . . .

Now all men know the end
Of that glorious Spanish army
But its four hundred courtesans
High in Spanish saddles
And its eight hundred courtesans
On high Spanish heels
May be marching forward
To their conquests and their glory,
May be marching onward
For all I've ever heard!

"Haisi Latkis"

By MAX ROBIN

HARD was life to bear in Russia, hard in summer, harder in winter. Summer, ah, summer. The sun warms. Nature is rich, generous. The air is permeated with its wholesome, sweet odors. And on the soul it feels light and joyous. Ah, summer, summer.... Food was cheap, even if money was dear. A sack of potatoes cost fifteen copecks. And what did clothing amount to? A bare skirt for the wife, a piece of garment for the child. Shoes? Who needed shoes? Even mother delighted in flapping about with her naked feet. But for young feet it certainly did not matter. It did them good. Let them get calloused. Only sometimes a splinter or a piece of glass —Well, also not terrible. Children's tears in such cases were customary, minimized, discounted. Children would not tell, were afraid, afraid of mother, and still more of father. But they would be caught limping, suffering in silence.

"Every Monday and Thursday he sticks himself," mother would say as she sat on her haunches before her boy and delved with needle held between clumsily crooked fingers into the "sticked" spot.

But mother was short-sighted, and search as she might she would find nothing in the complained of area. Giving up finally and rising to her feet, she would declare:

"Go, you haven't cut yourself, you are dreaming."

Still, for safety's sake, she tied up the foot; and then the mother-doctor would feel reasonably assured that "before the wedding it would heal up."

The boy hopped and swayed and danced. He cried—what boy did not cry? True, his wedding was yet far off,—but oh the foot, mamma, mamma! ....Followed the inevitable weary long trip to the hospital, waiting—endless waiting, many woeful gentle mothers, offensive white-haired youngsters. Then the man with the white apron, tucked-up sleeves and slender ever-clean hands. Scissors, cruel glistening little scissors. Iodoform. A tear-stained face on the way home, a neat bandage on the foot too nice to tread upon and proving only partly assuaging, a copeck from mother, sometimes accompanied by a kiss, and more limping—Brr.....

But in winter! Oh the rigors and harshness of winter, its misery and suffering for the poor housewife left alone with her brood to fight hunger and cold in a dreary, desolate, God-forsaken one-room dwelling! Not a piece of wood in the house. Thursday—before Friday—before Saturday. No flour for Saturday yet. And the frost burning. The steam rushing from the mouth in streams. Everything in the room unsightly and out of place. Snow covering the hinges of the door. The water freezing in the cask. And such fine flowers forming on the windows. And a sunset so rare and beautiful peering through the thin crust of ice, smiling

bleakly through those fast-blossoming flowers, with no one to smile back, no one to admire its crystalline charm. Wasted sunsets, wasted beauty, wasted years of blighted, frost-bitten childhood.... Darkness has settled so quickly, and now a dim, very dim light may be seen reflected in the windows and feebly, timidly facing, defying a night colder than ice and crisper than glass, a pitiless night, an unfriendly night, a night of quiet blasting fury, which permits no life, being happy unto itself.

Many such milky lights peered in frightened wonderment. They were signs of hovels, hovels crowding back, crowding together. And inside of those hovels there were many lives hiding, huddling, shivering. Few were they who knew warmth and comfort on such nights—few. God himself seemed cold, unkindly, if not wrathful and inexorable, hiding his face from the misery of his people.

And from afar, through this night of life-crushing frost and agony, there reached the music of merry jingling bells of troikas dashing away wildly over vast glittering snows and unsurpassed landscapes, of voices, fresh and lusty, shouting and singing hilariously in their robust God-given happiness..

Hard was life to bear in Russia, hard in summer, harder in winter....

Shailik was his name. His mother Chasi was a shoemaker—his mother not his father. His father had died, and when his father died his mother took his place at the littered low bench. So Shailik was a little boy about whom everything was long. His arms were thin and long, his legs, his head, face, ears, nose. Even his eyes were narrow and long. And his ears, transparent upstanding things, that seemed so very sensitive and alive by themselves, evoked one's pity, reminding one that here in the world was a poor unprotected little orphan. And some did call him Shailik the orphan.

At first, when he was too small for doing anything more useful, he sat, a tiny living being, watching his mother at work. His secret ambition then was to be a shoemaker himself. He somewhat loved his mother Chasi with the dark face, sharp copper features and clumps of black greasy hair falling from under her kerchief, which had once been white, and longed for the day when he would supersede her at that manly trade of shoe-repairing. His mouth watered at the thought, his brilliant eyes gleamed, and Shailik sighed.

His chance came when mother went to deliver an order which had been left uncalled-for and unpaid for an alarming fortnight. Of money there was always a crying need. Leather was high, rent had to be paid, fuel, potatoes and onions for the winter had to be proprovided,—and then who knows what might happen to the customer, one being always in God's hands? So Chasi went.

When he remained alone, Shailik climbed on top of the bench—climbed all over it. He crawled over the old shoes, tools and heap of odorous leather-chips which had accumulated with the years. This extended over the floor and rose in an abrupt slope to the stove, which Shailik now mounted, descended and mounted again. He threw things about, stopped to look and listen and felt like a king here, free

and happy, at his feet the pile of old chips, in his imagination assuming the shape of a treasure, he being its sole owner and guardian. The dream roused in his heart the proud feeling of possession. Adventure....fortune ....power....

He grew to a height when he could wear his father's coat for an overcoat and tie his shoes with cord about his feet. That was an achievement, the importance of which he certainly could not overlook. Shailik felt that he had attained his manhood, a state of complete and wilful independence, for which he had always longed, of which he had always dreamed. Incidentally he would also be of assistance to his mother.

He devised a scheme. It came to him ingeniously, in an inspiration. He would go about and peddle. He would sell something—hot pancakes! That would do. It would be a novelty in the town. People—storekeepers, flour-carriers, hawkers—staying out a whole day in the cold would gladly buy. He would make money.

Chasi heard of the plan. Her yellow face contracted in a sad smile. A bread-giver. Such a little one. But he feels the need. An orphan. And she consented. And together they started the trade, the mother doing the baking, the son the selling.

A little house, in a little town, the roof low, bending toward one side with age and silent weariness. Winter. Darkness. Snow. A smoke trailing lazily in the frosty air. And an eternal stillness around.

In front of an open oven a woman like a shadow stands. The weak flame, drawn by the chimney draught, curls outward, outward, barely curls, and lights up her face, fixed and motionless. The agreeable odor of baking rises in the room, fills it entirely, forcing out all the other odors that had formed its air. The woman bends, watches, bends, watches. Her countenance, aglow, is serene. She appears to think. Or perhaps she is lost in reverie. On the wall a flame like the one in the oven is panting, panting feebly for life

The woman tip-toes across the room.

"Shailik."

There comes a stir from somewhere in the darkness.

"Shailik."

"Yes, mamma, I'm getting up."

Cold in that end of the room. The window covered, as with a thick lid covered. The darkness fading. The flame leaping with a new life on the wall.

There is no more fire in the oven. The shadow from its door is gone. A blue mist has crept into the house. And two shadows, one smaller, the other larger, mysteriously move about.

"Moide ani lefunechu," murmurs a young voice in prayer.

And now the blue mist too is fading. A slim boy with long limbs, long head, long eyes, stands swathed in a long long coat. The shoes are big. The trousers fall over, but they are tied at the ankles, tied with cord.

A lone black figure now emerges in the open. A sieve hangs from his neck. He hurries market-ward, market-ward.....

The synagogues are lit. A door opens, now here, now there, and a Jew, all in an overcoat, steps out in the frost. His feet crunch in the snow. Crunch-

crunch, crunch- crunch, crunch-crunch .....Gone is the Jew now.

The market-place. A desolate square. Some flour-carriers in their white, forever white garb, in the center. The stores opening around.

A dark figure, almost a man, well-known and expected, is hastily approaching. There seems to be a suspense. And then a cry, the first cry, breaks through the morning stillness.

"Haisi latkis! Kalti babkis!"

As many people as there are out in this early cold hour seem to grow animated, rejoice.

"Haisi latkis! Kalti babkis!"

Yes, the day has begun.....

Shailik peddled. In the morning he went out. Noontime he came back. In the evening he went out again. He stayed out late, sometimes till nine, sometimes till ten o'clock. Up and down the market-square he strolled, the sieve hanging in front, and everywhere his voice was heard.

"Haisi latkis! Kalti babkis!"

"Hey, yingili, come here," called a storekeeper, whose home stood far at the edge of the town, where he went to eat and warm up but once during the day, when relieved by some one.

Shailik ran.

"Haisi latkis? Kalti babkis?"

His hand, out of the long sleeve, was in the sieve.

Boys were leaving the cheders. They were carrying lanterns, fancy paper lanterns of many makes and many colors. Their way did not always lead through the market-place. But they went there, adding extra distance, to see the mysterious boy with the sieve who was selling latkis.

They surrounded him. There was a group of fancy lanterns swaying, boys pushing, and Shailik selling in their midst.

"How do you sell your latkis?"

"A copeck and two for a copeck. The babkis are three copecks apiece. Buy, buy. How many, how many?"

And some boys bought. And then all dispersed, shouting and laughing.

And still Shailik paraded.

"Haisi latkis! Kalti babkis!"

He had to sell all.

When grown too monotonus, or if business was bad, Shailik changed the theme, and instead of "Haisi latkis, kalti babkis," he cried, cried plaintively, cried suppliantly:

"Haisi latkilach, yidilach, hai-si..."

The chant was drawn-out, irresistible, long. And then maybe a storekeeper did show his nose in the cold and called:

"Hey, yingili, come here."

And late, late, long after the boys from the cheders had gone away with their lanterns and the market-place stood deserted and dark, a child's shrill voice still came crying through the frosty night.

"Haisi latkis! Kalti babkis!"

There was despair in that. It became at times like a wail of pain and blood and tears.

Chilled to the bone, his feet numb, he was going home. Alone he was going, a dark figure trudging silently through the sleeping town, a round sieve hanging in front, always that round sieve hanging in front..... There in the sieve, wrapped in soft towels, a cold babki—a fat latki—baked on a large dry leaf, had remained unsold. Hungry, Shailik eats it. As he eats it his hands are in his pockets,

and he counts. "Eighteen, eighteen and a half, nineteen——" The snow crunches, crunches under his feet....

The little house again. His home. He pushes the door and it pulls him in.

The room is dark. It's warm. Mother is asleep.

Off goes the sieve at last. The latkiseller finds his way to his place in the corner. Many cords to untie, badly knotted cords too.

"Shailik," calls Chasi.

"Twenty copecks, mamma!" announces the boy impatiently as he tiptoes to her side.....

He is under cover. His long coat too is on top. His toes are cold. He doubles up. He has forgotten to recite the "Shema." He murmurs now, piously, devoutly. He is warm. He is happy. Still he shivers. He is happy. Twenty copecks—twenty copecks.....

Sonnet to Minna

By MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Sometimes your heart grows hoydenish and new,
And rescues words inconsequent and flushed
That run like fallacies, whose laughs have crushed
The scandals of a cold word known as true.
Your thoughts would alter to a dungeoned crew
If they retained the hard and smoothly brushed
Rebukes of logic, and were never rushed
To fantasies of scampering line and hue.

Philosophers will stone you, magic scamp,
And realists will cleave you with their sneer,
But censure them with questions made of foam
And color to relieve their heavy camp.
Beneath the strain of every scowl and leer
A poisoned, muttering lightness longs to roam.

Poems

By RICHARD KIRK

The Talking Stream

Down by the stream-side
All the tired stones
Lay fast asleep;
For the clear tones
Fell and fell and fell,
Like the drip-drops from a bucket in a well,
Or like words spoken, since talk began,
By a patient Woman to her Man.

The Memorial

I am glad that little grows to less,
And then to no sure thing.
How sad were that memorial, in duress
Of no diminishing,
To stand forever faithful to the tale
Of what we strived for, found not, in this vale!

The Blinded

Day after day and dark between,
God be thanked for that dark screen!
And for the dark that like a wall
Hides the last white space of all,
If space, if day, there be, behind
What still assures us we are blind.

Life In a Song

A song is shallow, like a grave,
Yet it may keep, for foe or friend,
Safe from the wind and from the wave,
A little sadness to the end.

No Charms Have Bound Me

By JOHN McCLURE

No charms have bound me here.
  I can arise and go
When death's far-winding horns
  Whine in adagio.

That canker of despair I found
  Which he cannot forget
Who once has lain bedfellow
  With sorrow and regret.

I have found every sweet
  Swathing its salty tear:
With unenchanted feet
  I can depart from here.

Spent Rockets

By BASIL THOMPSON

His fame which late, shot like a rocket high,
Now like a rocket done, falls to the bed of earth:
What yesterday was a burst of stars in the sky,
Today lies a singed stick bedded in earth.
Fame is a rocket's flare and a black dearth.

Dearth is upon us all, children sending up rockets
That hiss and blaze and break and drop with a thud;
Pennies to buy them—dreams! dreams in our pockets
Spent for a sputter of stars and a charred stick's thud.
Fame is a shot bolt and a shaft sunk in mud.

John Donne

By ROYALL SNOW

THE kings of English poetry are those who can tame the lightning of pure inspiration, control it and force it to a sustained incandescence. They are few—perhaps only Shakespeare perhaps Shelley also at his infrequent very best, or Marlowe in a single scene. Lear upon the heath, or Faustus as the clock ticks away his final hour, speak in poetry that is wrought neither of passion nor of intellect; its content, reduced to bare prose, is nothing, nor is it a matter of mere verbal magic. Rather, throughout these scenes, the poet's intuition searches deeper into human verities than words can go, and phrases them in evocatory syllables which give his audience a burning sense—not a logical comprehension—of that same unphraseable truth. But next to the kings there stand the princes, equally of the blood royal, for the single distinction is that, while the one controls inspiration, upon the other it bursts and escapes. And among these John Donne is by no means the least eminent.

His poetry is of that exciting type that cannot be guaged a page in advance: it may be impossibly bad or impossibly good; sensual or religious—fantastic or sincere. Ultimately the paradoxes vanish, but in a first impression they compete with a sense of the splendour of his lines of pure inspiration. For Donne has the quality, reserved to poets of the first rank, of throwing off a line that plunges into the dark of human conciousness like a rocket into the night, showering stars. His tomb wherein, opened, one will spy

> A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,

has that touch of anguish which belongs to ultimate truth;—oddly enough, pain is the basis of our greatest poetry; and there is a tinge of spiritual sufferbehind his:

> This soul, to whom Luther and Mahomet were
> Prisons of the flesh.

But such lines are of the type which defies analysis—they are the great in Donne but by no means the whole of him. His average is of the sort which leaves the critical judgement somewhat abashed. Interpretation and judgement are its business, but how interpret the whirlwind, and what judgement may be given of a pile of debris sprinkled with diamonds?—the effect of the mass of his work is indeed superficially that of debris. An academician could fairly swoon over "forgetful" being made a rhyme for "debt" by the horrid process of chopping it in half and carrying the mangled last syllable over to start a new line. His rhythms tend to stagger through a wilderness of cacophony before they break onto the sweep of his best; and such a tumble, jumble, and snarl of thought and ugly words had never been seen before and was not seen again among great poets before the two hundred years had elaps-

ed to Browning. Faced with such a mingling of the inferior and the supreme, the critic can only throw up his hands and remember what the first printer said of Donne's book: "Whoso takes not as he finds it, in what manner soever, he is unworthy of it, sith a scattered limb of this author hath more amiableness in it, in the eyes of a discerner, than the whole body of some other."

It was Donne's use of the perilous conceit which prejudiced the practical succeeding century against him. Dr. Johnson, one of the brilliant fools of criticism, could not endure them, and Donne never has completely come out from under the cloud of that prejudice. But it must not be forgotten that, while the unsuccessful conceit is an absurdity, the one that succeeds is no longer a conceit but the finest emotional poetry. Shakespeare's:

> Shall I compare thee to a summer day;
> Thou art more lovely and more
> temperate.

can mock at Dr. Johnson—and is a conceit. And in essence Donne is doing precisely the same thing save that where Shakespeare's genius, which was really an apothesis of normality, turned to the common life of nature for symbols, Donne's fantastic intellect went roving into the remoter worlds of erudite lore. Like a jack-daw he was fascinated by the shining oddities to be found here or there, and like a jack-daw he brought them back to his nest: in his illness he compares himself to a map that the cosmographers—his physicians—study; parted lovers are like the legs of a pair of compasses; and eyes take on some of the qualities of Venetian beads in two such lines as these:

> Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
> Our eyes upon one double string.

The effect is startling—but not quite so startling when embedded among all the other spectacular elements his poetry presents. There his conceits have at least the easy self confidence of being at home.

Donne is after all of the great, and if the rags and tatters of his form cannot dim his beauty, neither can the worst of his conceits spoil him, for he was a playmate of fire. There is in him a brilliant capriciousness which is his peculiar savour, and which comes not from his virtues but his faults. His instinct knew the wisdom of being unwise, and, with the mocking line—

> For all our joys are but fantastical

he abandoned himself to a world of golden caprice and paradox,—intense passions struggle in him with religious fervor, spectacular bursts of fancy play across a pose of utter worldliness, the cynic turns transcendentalist with the turn of a page. And yet this effervescence is only the surface of the man, the heart of him held something else—the strangest of all qualities to find there—a ruthless and passionate sincerity. For Donne was something more than a fantastic who had stolen the secret of the finest magic with which to conjure up his great lines. He was something too of a saint, and though he might draw the odd garment of his caprice, embroidered and spangled with sequins, close about him,—he never for an instant, in all his waywardness, wavered from that passionate sincerity.

Behind every line of even the most inconsequential poem there is the voice

of complete honesty. It means what it says, though perhaps only for the moment. But that is enough, for Truth Absolute is an illusion of the philosophers and has no commerce with poetry. And Donne is one of the few who can be sincere even in their insincerities. He may glorify unfaithfulness, saying:

> I can love her, and her, and you, and you;
> I can love any so she be not true

but it is only a mocking application of his

> Change is the nursery
> Of music, joy, life, eternity.

And from this comparatively trivial tone he can turn to the magnificent sweep of the destiny stanza from the *Progress of the Soul*,—a stanza which begins, incidentally, with a conceit:

> Great Destiny, the commissary of God
> Thou hast mark'd out a path and period
> For everything, who, where we offspring took,
> Our ways and ends seest at one instant. Thou
> Knot of all causes, thou whose changeless brow
> Ne'er smiles nor frowns, O vouchsafe thou to look
> And show my story, in thy eternal book.
> That—if my prayer be fit—I may understand
> So much myself, as to know with what hand,
> How scant or liberal this my life's race is spann'd.

That same sincerity goes with Donne always and into strange places. It leads him to discharge upon the head of the hapless Julia such lines as—

> Hark, news, O envy; thou shalt hear descried
> My Julia; who as yet was ne'er envied.
> To vomit gall in slander, swell her veins
> With calumny, that hell itself disdains
> Is her continual practice;

it follows him into bed with his mistress in a poem which might well set Mrs. Grundy into a flutter of alarm for the morals of the young; it goes with him, too, into his religion.

Thanks to that honesty in all situations, both the love poetry and the divine poems, two of the chief divisions of Donne's work, catch equally the flavour of his alert and restless intellect. Mankind in love tends to a certain uniformity of emotion, the individual is lost in the general; but Donne contrives to protect the frontiers of his personality from invasion. He remains always John Donne in love—never merely the lover. The blending of the physical and the spiritual in his erotic poetry is a critical commonplace. Having the Elizabethan lustiness he avows with a devastating frankness and a word of scorn for those who pretend otherwise, that a man's interest in woman has only one purpose. The cynicism of a Restoration worldling gleams through his fear lest some day a woman will be faithful to him—a fear which amounts almost to absurdity. Yet, playing over the animalism is an intensity which etherealizes. In the end "joys are but fantastical" and sensualism is wedded to phantasy and spirit. It is Pan at large in the world of shades.

Equally intense, equally John Donne are the religious poems, save that wheras in the love poetry his

> Soul, whose child love is
> Takes limbs of flesh,

in the divine poetry we have the effort of the limbs of flesh to resolve themselves into pure soul again. The note of anguish, never far distant, and yet

in most of his work hidden by the gilded decoration of his capricious imagination, comes out clear. He is uncertain, suffering, repentant of that flesh which made him the great poet he is in his erotic work, repentant and yet not sure that he is either sufficiently or permanently so. "Batter my heart," he cries:

> Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you
> As yet but knock; . . . .
> Take me to you, imprison me, for I
> Except you enthral me, never shall be free,
> Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

And, characteristically, his spiritual anguish speaks in a paradox.

How is one to sum up this metaphysical sensualist, this poet who makes playthings of the stars and stumbles for a rhyme, this saint who is a worldling. To resolve inconsistencies one must, I believe, go behind the lines of the poet and find the man—a man perplexed by a world rapidly growing more incomprehensible. Donne, it must not be forgotten, was the first English poet to feel the dislocating effect of the intrusion of science, and the first to rebel against it. For two hundred years after him the poets avoided difficulty by simply ignoring it, and for them the problem did not become acute until the middle of the last century. But Donne's mind was at once too curious and too fundamentally sincere to preserve the old illusory world by the simple device of shutting his eyes. At the same time he was too acute not to see the menace science brought with it. There is at once bitterness and alarm in his ringing-line.

> They have impaled within a zodiac
> The free-born sun, and keep twelve signs awake
> To watch his steps.

and the same bitterness is in his

> And new philosophy calls all in doubt;
> The element of fire is quite put out;
> The sun is lost, and th' earth, and no man's wit
> Can well direct him where to look for it.

For some thousands of years the mass of mankind had thought the earth at least fixed solidly, whatever the stars might do. And with a twist of his fingers Copernicus had just sent that solid earth spinning dizzily through space. The complicated structure of scholastic philosophy, weak with dry-rot, had gone down with a crash before Bacon's touch. Within a few years Descartes was to make the soul, which to Plato and the neoplatonists of the Renaissance had been pure fire, an uneasy tenant of the Pineal gland. The old order of thought was breaking up and Donne's inquisitive imagination was trapped in the wreckage. The restlessness of his temperament is perhaps born of that predicament. Shaken in the old and unable to acept the new, he is instinctively in pursuit of the calm that comes from complete absorption in a passion. Now it is a woman, now it is God that he pursues; the basis is the same, the finding in the tempest of emotion and in the flaring wild jets of fancy which accompany it, an odd distorted calm.

The Madman

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

The circling hills
Broad-flung and high
Outline black crests
On a red sky.

Along the skyline
Vague and dim
I saw a man
And followed him.

Ever he cried
"There came from the south
A corn-haired woman
With sunset mouth

And when the sun sinks
In a scarlet stir
Madness returns
To remember her!"

Along the hill slope
I heard him cry
Shapeless and dark
Against the sky.

Epigram

By JAMES FEIBLEMAN

Because I stand beneath a star
(A straight line drawn between two points
Was proved to be the shortest path),
It follows as an aftermath
I am not one the Lord anoints
But only perpendicular.

Eminence

By TUPPER GREENWALD

CAIUS HEGEDUS the Younger is quite happy in Hell.

To be sure, in the beginning his incarceration—for so he regarded it—galled him, for had he not been one of the most devout of all the Christians in Alexandria? Had he not fought with unbounded Christian ardor under Bishop Theophilus, the thunder-hurling foe of paganism and this-worldliness, and, in fact, had not the venerable Theophilus kissed him on both cheeks for his service in the burning of the Alexandrian library, that infamous store-house of pagan polemics? Had he not—? But the Authorities smiled wanly. Caius Hegedus found himself compelled to stand guard at the Entrance—with three thousand other Christians. An eighteen-hour shift.... The conversation of his companions was a marathon of protestations of piety. It was Hell.

But man is said to be a plastic animal, and in time Hegedus became reconciled to his situation. When Bishop Theophilus—for he too was incarcerated—presumed on his earthly prestige and tried to browbeat his fellow gatekeepers into service as his lackeys, Hegedus forthwith told him to go to Hell. He grew to hate the man's presence—so much so, in fact, that he applied to the Authorities for a transfer. After five centuries, in 896, this was granted, and Hegedus became a doorman in the Employment Office. This made him happy. In 1396 he was promoted to the position of file-clerk. This made him happier. But what made him happiest of all necessitates the recounting of an incident in Hegedus' life on this earth.

It happened *Anno Domini* 392, four years before his death from an alimentary disturbance occasioned by the eating of too much fish from Agrigentum. Now though Caius Hegedus was a very good Christian, he was a very bad poet. It would be exaggerating to say that Christianity had anything to do with his badness as a poet. He was a verse-maker for many years before he became a Christian. The truth is, he was a man of very tawdry emotions, and these, no matter how painstakingly he tricked them out in the plumage of Horace and Homer, persisted in remaining tawdry. A bloodless simulacrum, a tepid poetaster, this Hegedus. And the *intelligentsia* of Alexandria refused to be bamboozled. They knew him for what he was: a pretentious ass. His own father, Caius Hegedus the Elder, an honest, though pagan, cooper, who knew good poetry when he saw it, was thoroughly ashamed of him.

The son found life very irksome. He felt a scalding resentment against his abusers, the pagans. His heart burned for revenge. So he became a Christian under the banner of Bishop Theophilus, spending whole days in the streets of Alexandria shouting Christian epithets at the disbelievers. Caius Hegedus the Younger made himself a nuisance.

At night, in the loneliness of his chamber, he often read and re-read his

manuscripts. His heart, the tenuous remnants of his conscience, told him he was a tenth-rater. The pagans were right. But they had used the truth as a taunt and he loathed them.

His work, he recognized, was abysmally inferior to the infidel manuscripts lodged in the Alexandrian library. Their authors, he knew, were marked out for immortality. The fact hurt him. He wanted nothing so much as fame, adulation, the praise of posterity. But how to secure it?

"If we are to purge Alexandria of disbelief," cried Theophilus to his cohorts one day, "we must destroy the corrupt things that disbelief feeds on." He pointed out that the best way to make Alexandria safe for Christianity was to burn the writings in the library, whence the infidels found rational sustenance for persevering in their ungodliness. Theophilus' proposal was met with hosannahs, no one shouting more exuberantly than Caius Hegedus. Midnight, two nights later, was appointed for the burning. All good Christians were exhorted to provide themselves with torches.

The night before the burning, an idea was marvellously born in Caius' brainpan. On the morning of the great day, after putting his manuscripts into a large bag, he walked very nonchalantly into the library. Then he sauntered through the building, stooping now and again—ostensibly to consult some particularly formidable work, but actually to insert one of his effusions inside the leaves. After three hours of these manoeuvres he had unburdened himself of the works of a lifetime, and departed content.

And that evening he earned the aforementioned kisses from the venerable Theophilus.

He not only revenged himself on the pagans, but, as he regarded it, assured himself no small measure of eminence in the future.

To-day Caius Hegedus the Younger is happy—happy in an awareness of his egregious foresight. He feels that he did an uncommonly shrewd and foresighted thing in allowing his *opera* to go up in flames cheek by jowl with those of the great pagans. The reason? Caius has heard through the latest influx of sinners that each year Middle-Western professors of philosophy assure their students, in tones of deep regret:

"In the destruction of the Alexandrian library in 392 A. D. civilization suffered an inestimable loss. Thousands upon thousands of precious manuscripts. . . ."

Live Oak and Lion

By BASIL THOMPSON

The live oak with its beard of moss is the lion of the trees,
The great trunk of the live oak is a lion's mighty girth.
Whenever I see a live oak so, thrusting out of the earth,
I think of the roaring lord of the beasts in old histories.

The live oak has a majesty and a grandeur of a keeping
With the majesty and grandeur of the fabled lions of yore:
The live oak is the forests' lord and the lion of legend sleeping—
Mark how the winds through its swaying beard capture the lion's roar.

Quintessential

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

I would sing of a lady so good
That she is nothing to me.
Had she but one virtue the less
She would shine magnificently,
She would blaze in scarlet and purple,
Or be cool as a malachite,
Or she would be amber and gold
To my never failing delight . . .
But this lady is good, so good,
Not the smallest fault has she
And she shines in unwavering white
Most insignificantly.

Recommended

By BANBURY CROSS

I. To the Fastidious

The discernment of a gentleman is no less nice
than the easy diffidence of drawing-room mice
or the taste displayed by well-bred lice.

Consider the modesty of a mouse
and the fine discrimination of a louse
and repent, O man, your hermetical house.

II. To An Honest Cutthroat

A general massacre of maidenlady poets
is subject to debate
but the tidy murder of a certain estimable spinster
we advocate
as not only highly beneficial to the human
kind but an act of kindness to the unhappy woman.

The doingaway of all female minnesingers
is a question moot
but a neat assassination in isolated cases
we toot
as a singular demonstration of patriotic zeal
and a distinct contribution to the common weal.

So to you, honest cutthroat, is justified
this little business of sororicide.

III. For the Tomb of a Noted Wit

This will serve for his epitaph:
sedulously he managed to laugh
half a buffoon and a snob half.

A French Follower of Arthur Machen

By CUTHBERT WRIGHT

THE publishers Emile-Paul have done well to reprint the first book of P. J. Toulet, a poet and novelist now dead who is notable by reason of his originality and distinction and, particularly, by his relations, literary and personal with a contemporary Celtic writer who is the subject of discussion.

I owe my discovery of Toulet to an article in one of the numerous little reviews that pululate under the arcades of the Odéon at Paris. The writer of the article called attention to certain marked resemblances which he pretended existed between Toulet and the author of "The Hill of Dreams." I have always been sufficiently intrigued by Mr. Machen's talent to track down to the last extent the work of a writer who not only translated "The Great God Pan" into French, but whose own books were said to resemble Machen's to a degree that suggested plagairism. But the result of the inquiry was an agreeable disappointment. "Monsieur de Paur," the novel most cited by the writer, is certainly not "The Great God Pan" in a French domino; it is, on the the contrary, a disconcertingly original work, deserving perhaps to be ranked in that assembly of forgotten masterpieces which is the subject of a literary inquiry in France at the present moment. The real connection between the author of "Monsieur de Paur" and Mr. Machen limits itself to the fact that Toulet did actually translate "The Great God Pan" after a visit to London in 1899, and that he has taken the liberty of introducing certain tricks of manner and even a certain atmosphere into the English portions of "Monsieur de Paur," which are to some degree, the manner and atmosphere of Machen in his early tales of fantasy and horror. Apart from this, the two writers are as different as possible.

The author whom Toulet really resembles is Stendhal. The influence of the great Beyle hovers like a presiding deity over the style, the philosophy, the morally exotic atmosphere of this first novel, and on its title-page is inscribed this quotation from Stendhal: "Is it then so impossible in this century to unite the honors of virtue with the pleasures of vice?"

It does not seem so impossible to Pierre-Benigne de Paur who begins life, the cadet of a good family ruined by the Revolution, and after a series of somewhat mole-like adventures, becomes a famous man of letters and a deputy. All this portion of the book is a little breviary of the successful climber, untroubled by inconvenient convictions or regrets. For it is always lightly implicit in these pages of a perverse and delicate satire that M. de Paur, crowned by honors and esteemed of all, is in the eyes of God and the discerning reader, an egoist, a bit of a knave, a discreet coward. And with all that, as the Count de Mun remarked in a discourse pronounced before the Academy in 1898, M. de Paur is an "honest man."

"There is nothing in the world so frightful as the soul of an 'honest man,'" said in a lucid moment the celebrated reactionary Joseph de Maistre.

The coup d'état executed by Louis-Napoleon gives Pierre-Benigne the post of minister at the little German court of Neuswabia,—a singular duchy where half the inhabitants are mad and kept in cages, the other half incurably melancholy. The taciturn atmosphere of the tiny capitol penetrates even into the taverns, and the functionaries who frequent the "Divus Augustus" symmetrically seated in small groups chat in low tones of things long past. "The handsome girls who serve them have never needed to defend themselves against inquisitive hands, but brush past the knees of the drinkers without enthusiasm. At last, midnight sounds, probably as a signal to other phantoms, and sends those in the tavern home to bed."

At the court of Neuswabia, M. de Paur encounters the beautiful and troubling Madame de Violetten whom the writer of the article mentioned above pretended was first cousin to the satanic Helen Vaughan in Machen's story. She has eyes of a blue almost black à propos of which the German courtiers never failed to evoke her name or rather that of her late husband, "who was found hanging on the staircase the morning of their wedding-night."

M. de Paur marries this enigmatic beauty with her air of an old print by Fragonard; they return together to Paris, and there in a flurry of crinolines and char-a-bancs and parties of croquet at Compéigne, in the full sunset of the third Empire, Mme. de Paur becomes the wonder of the town and for a short period the bosom friend of the exquisite Empress Eugénie. The pages in which that picturesque epoch are delicately described have an extraordinary charm and may serve to guage the difference between this Stendhalian and Mr. Machen. All the Toulet satanism is secondary and superimposed upon a background which only a Frenchman could properly evoke.

"Au printemps qui suivit, le crokett état de mode: sur la pelouse vert pale oú il nous retenait les toilettes éclatantes et claires bouffaient sur des crinolines et ressemblaient a des calices renversés. Il y avait de toutes petites ombrelles au bout de longs manches á cassure, et des chapeaux de paille bossués et débordantes de fleurs. Il y avait des gens sur les doubles fauteuils d'osier, á se dire des choses qu'on n'entendait pas, des gens qu'il fallait appeler plusieurs fois quand c'était leur tour de jouer. Il y avait d'autres colloques, entre diplomates ou politiques, et parmi tout cela, se mèlant aux groupes, donnant un conseil, prenant un maillet au besoin, et plus semblables a des maitres de maison qu'a des monarques, l'Empereur aux yeux troubles, et l'Imperatrice aux cheveux d'or."

It is in this same masterly fourth chapter, at the moment when M. de Paur divorces his wife at the request of Napoleon III, that the Machen influence is really manifest. At the trial, an English agent furnishes a report on the adventures of Mme. de Paur in a sinister London suburb which might easily be the Harlesden or Wormwood Scrubs of Mr. Machen's wanderings. The curious

can easily see themselves the debt owed to the English writer in the creation of the peculiarly morbid atmosphere which Toulet sought to introduce at this juncture of his story.

The report is supposed to be written in French, but in order to give it an air of greater reality, three passages are parenthesised in English. Turn to "The Great God Pan," and one will discover that each of the three are found textually in the English story.

(1) "Ils secouaient la tête et haussaient les sourcils, jugeant la comtesse bizarre (People shook their heads and raised their eyebrows and thought the countess rather queer.")

(2) "J'éprouvai assez absurdement que la maison avait la physionomie la plus déplaisante que j'eusse jamais observé. (I thought, absurdedly enough, that the house had the most unpleasant physiognomy I had ever observed.")

(3) Finally the end of "Monsieur de Paur" has a touch unmistakably Machenesque in its equivocation, the reliance on the morbid imagination of the reader to produce a certain "kick," if the expression is permissible. The old diplomat expires in his charming Napoleonic house overlooking the Parc Monceau, surrounded by his servants to whom he gives counsels of a paternal virtue. "Never more," he says, "will I see a white sun beating on the town, powdering far away the Arc de Triomphe beyond the deserted boulevards." A priest, the Abbe N—, curate at St. Augustin, comes to administer the last sacraments..... "Hardly three or four minutes had passed when a cry was heard from the bedroom. We rushed back, and found the Abbe N— stretched unconscious at the foot of the bed, while Pierre-Benigne, recumbent in death, retained on his lips the enigmatic vestige of a last smile."

One can say, in summing up, that Toulet admired Machen, and introduced into his own work, particularly into "Monsieur de Paur," touches which would not have appeared with quite the same coloring had he never known and read the English writer. But the literary temperaments of the two men are very different. Machen is romantic and sombre, and he derives from an almost purely English tradition. Toulet, in his special fashion, is a light writer, classic, Voltairian, very French. His best work suggests a garden designed by Lenôtre with studied avenues and trimmed walks, gradually widening to a prospect of dim woods and harmonious waters. But one seldom skirts the pale balustrades in order to explore that wild and disquieting Nature which environs the splendid and delicate artifice of man. One is content to examine curiously in the fine sand of the alleys the trace of the cloven hoof.

Georg Kaiser: Pioneer

By BARRETT H. CLARK

GEORGE KAISER is the leader of the new German dramatic movement, the only vital dramatic movement of our time. He is of all his generation the one who sees his epoch most clearly and is the best able to interpret it to the world. The "movement" of which Kaiser is the inspiration is simply a group of young men who are striving to understand the forces of modern society which shape the frightful thing we call civilization. Kaiser himself and the best of his associates have succeeded in reflecting a surprisingly large sector of modern life.

Georg Kaiser is very young only in spirit; he is actually forty-five. His first play appeared over eighteen years ago: he has had to wait not only for appreciation—he has little of that today—but for a hearing until now, after the war has shown us something of the underlying reasons for things.

Here is Kaiser's biography, dictated by himself in his characteristic stenographic style: "The fifth of six brothers. Born in Magdeburg 25 November, 1878. Son of the merchant Friedrich Kaiser. After schooling...three years in business...Followed three years in Buenos Aires. Illness, due to climate, led him to Spain, Italy, and back to Germany. Then some time in Magdeburg. At the age of 25, first work—tragic-comedy of sickness and longing: *Rektor Kleist.* 1908, marriage and emigration to seaside watering place. Since 1911 resided at Weimar during winters." This brief statement was brought up to date not long ago when I went to see Herr Kaiser. "My wife and I and our two children *starved* during the last two years of the war, a period of heroism unparalleled in history. I was well-to-do before the war, now I'm poor. I live in the country near Erkner."

Aside from the intrinsic merit of his best plays, Kaiser is a pioneer. He has discovered a new method of presenting human beings and expressing ideas. The barbarity of modern life—so thinly disguised under the amenities of "civilization"—, the mad waste of human material and energy, the masquerade of freedom of action and freedom of speech, the grim farce of capital and labor, and above all the race for gold—these are phenomena which have as yet been scarcely touched upon by artists: a few novelists have attacked the problem of presentation apart from interpretation, and a dramatist or two have perhaps scratched the surface. How on earth is one to *state,* let alone interpret, the forces of industrialism in terms of art? How many dramatists have half the energy of a James J. Hill, the vision of an Andrew Carnegie? Lacking these, how can the forces set in motion by these men be adequately presented in terms of the theater

Georg Kaiser has both the energy and the vision, and he has more than once succeeded in compressing the forces of his time into a couple of hours in a theater or a hundred scant pages in a

book. How has he done it? By synthesis, by symbolism, by allegory, by compression, by elimination. He has exposed the whole heartless fabric of modern life in his best plays.

First a few words about the man. I went to see him yesterday. I now realize better than I had from reading his thirty plays just what he means by energy. "Energy," he says, "is the driving force of the world. Without energy there is nothing. Sentiment, pity, romance, are the refuge of the weak; they must inevitably go down. The unfortunate are hindrances. Go out into the world and see what men really are: watch them in business: they are brutal, self-seeking, egotistic, energetic, heartless. It is only through relentless will-power that injustice and stupidity can be eliminated."

This energy is by no means merely physical: the successive "heroes" of *Die Koralle*, *Gas I* and *Gas II* are driven forward by a spiritual goad in quest of an ideal man. "Not until we forget our old notions of forgiveness and pity will it be possible to found a new order." The new order, need I add, is not an ideal "state," but a civilization directed by men of superior moral and physical strength. A touch of Nietzsche, you see.

These statements were made in abrupt sentences, over the lunch table in Herr Kaiser's rooms in Berlin. Kaiser is the exemplification of his "hero," a man of vital energy, quick decision. He is of middle height, with scant light hair, large clear blue eyes. He speaks rapidly, with enthusiasm and decision. His speech is full of expressive figures. There is something about him that reminds me of Wedekind, only Wedekind had something sinister about the eyes. And like Wedekind he is an idealist; unlike Wedekind as well, his idealism is of the intellect, Wedekind's was of the body.

Kaiser's hero-worship is obvious in most of his early plays ,and when we spoke of *Die Bürger von Calais* his eyes lighted up. "Yes," as you say, "I *was* inspired by Rodin's statutes. The huge fellow with the key, rugged determination strongly marked in his haggard features—magnificent. And the idea of those six men ready to march forth —in time of peace!—to sacrifice their lives for an idea. That struck to the roots of my young soul."

He has little to say of his own work. He continues to write plays, whether they are produced or not, knowing that present conditions throughout the country are hardly favorable to the younger men, and these plays are written simply because they must be written. *Gilles und Jeanne*, his latest, "gave him no rest until it was finished"; every work is the result of an inner need for self-expression. One play follows another in quick succession: when the time comes they will be produced by the right manager in the right way.

"One must be altogether of one's day and generation. That's obvious, of course. No matter what story or characters or time you choose, you are always that. I have written about Socrates ond Jeanne d'Arc, George Sand and Tristan and Isolde, Judith and Holofernes, but the people and situations are no more than pretexts. What do I know of Alcibiades? We have a few pages of Xenophon and Plato, but what is that? I had something to say about human beings and I took names

and epochs that happened to interest me. What do I care if I am 'historically inaccurate?' What if I make Jeanne d'Arc refer to Columbus before he was born, or mention Mallarmé in a George Sand play? I'm not a historian. I am of my day and generation, and I use the present merely as a starting place, a jumping-off point and soar into the future, or at least point toward it."

Kaiser's early plays are more or less experimental, though in each case he knew exactly what he was doing. It was not until the advent of the war that he began to see the world whole and see it clearly; to express what he saw he evolved his technique, a technique that has already been proved effective not only by Kaiser himself but by his successors.

Let us consider some of the plays. There are over thirty. A half dozen of the earliest were printed only in a small private edition. The first to be made public was *Rektor Kleist,* a bitter comedy in the manner of Wedekind, who was to influence the young writer in most of his immature efforts. This was followed by *Sorina, Der Zentaur, Die Versuchung,* and *Die Jüdische Witwe,* works of varying merit. *Der Zentaur* is scarcely characteristic, but it reveals possibilities that the dramatist has not since seen fit to develop.

The idealistic schoolmaster Konstantin Strobel is engaged to Judith Vierkant. Judith's deceased aunt has stipulated in her will that the girl shall marry at the age of nineteen and have a child a year after, otherwise Judith and her husband as well as her parents will lose the fortune. Konstantin, to his regret, has never proved his ability to fulfill his strange obligation. Complications ensue, based rather on the dramatist's desire to set forth an ethical problem than to show human beings, and the farce becomes almost absurd. *Der Zentaur,* however, has moments of high farce and reveals Kaiser's ability to think in terms of the theater.

Die Jüdische Witwe is, I believe, the first of the plays in which a historical or legendary theme is used. In this early work, as in all the others in which he borrowed his story and his dramatic figures, Kaiser never selects a character for his own sake: the personage—whether he be called Tristan, or "The Man in Gray," or simply Number 17—is rarely more than an abstraction. *Die Jüdische Witwe,* for example, is ostensibly the story of Judith and Holofernes. Actually, it is a modern satirical comedy about a young girl in search of a lover. She is disappointed and on returning to her people is honored as a heroic and self-sacrificing vestal. A "Biblical comedy" is what Herr Kaiser calls it. It is much more comic than Biblical.

König Hahnrei need not detain us long. Tristan and Isolde and King Mark are the names of the characters, but the play is actually a satire on the fatuous Mark. You feel almost that it was written in furious protest against the romantically lascivious Wagner. Mark struts through long acts of rhetoric proclaiming that he is "the happiest king in the world." It appears (the play is rather obscure) that the old king insists upon the consummation of the young pair's love in order to "free his mind of lustful fancies"—a strangely perverse desire, but after Tristan and Isolde have been killed, the king appears to be as troubled as before, and

repeats that he is "the happiest king in the world."

In *Der Gerettete Alkibiades* we begin to perceive definite indications of the dramatist's mature manner. The young German critics, with few exceptions, are more obscure and wordy than the muddiest of the plays they set out to clarify. According to them, every play of Georg Kaiser is a philosophical essay in which the ideas of half a dozen other thinkers must be expounded and well digested before the play can be rightly understood. I am not a German critic and I shall limit my remarks to the statement that while Kaiser is something of a philosopher himself and while many philosophers have influenced his work, his plays are generally more drama than philosophy, which is as it should—nay, must be.

Der Gerettete Alkibiades is a simple story: Socrates saves the life of the great general, almost by accident, and brings victory to the Greek army. He is honored by receiving the crown of gold, which he gives over immediately to Alcibiades. The general then comes to the philosopher, becomes his disciple is convinced of the futility of brute force, and the domination of the mind over the body. Disillusioned when Socrates refuses the favor of the lovely Phryne, he overturns the sacred images and flees. Socrates is found nearby, brought before the judges, condemned, and dies as we know him to have died.

There is a good deal of Plato in this play, not so much perhaps in the material as in the method. "Plato's drama," says Herr Kaiser, is an essay on The Drama of Plato," "is superior to all others. Speech and answer follow one another, each sentence loaded with new ideas. The Yes leaps on ahead of the No to a more complete Yes; the ascent is cleared with a tremendous impulse, and at the end the entire soul stands revealed as by the Hand of God." The author calls his Alcibiades piece a "Denk-Spiel"—a "Think-Play." Which it is. But it is much more besides. We need not have read Plato in order to understand it. It suffices that Kaiser has read Plato.

The three one-act plays, *Claudius, Friedrich und Anna,* and *Juana,* are the most clean-cut, the most readily understood of all the Kaiser plays, though by no means the best. They were written only too evidently to illustrate various aspects of the same theme, and that is their weakness. The idea, I have no doubt, came first, and the characters—or rather the marionettes—selected in order to prove it. The idea is simply this: what happens to man or wife, or both, when the wife is faithless? Example number 1 *(Claudius):* a knight kills all the men suspected to be in love with his young and beautiful wife, and returns to his castle to find that the lady has given herself to such men as she could help and inspire "through her youth." The husband realises that it was a mistake to leave her alone, but in a jealous rage he kills her and burns down the house.

Example number 2 *(Friedrich und Anna):* on the morning after his wedding, a young man learns that another claims to have been intimate with her years before. He is urged to fight a duel, but instead of doing so he cross-questions his wife. She not only admits the facts but declares that she gave herself with joy and happiness. The husband then sends for the other man

and turns to his wife, saying: "I shall tell him how grateful I am, for he was once able to make you truly happy."

Example number 3 *(Juana):* a woman re-marries some years after her husband is supposed to have died. The latter returns and claims the woman, who is asked to decide between her two husbands. The rejected "husband" must drink poison. While the men are waiting, the woman herself drinks the poison and reconciles the men. "Friendship," she says, "is so rare" between men, and dies.

I have purposely reduced the stories of these one-acters to their essentials. That, after all, is Kaiser's own method. He thinks in outlines, he conceives his characters as skeletons, and clothes them with just sufficient flesh to keep them from falling apart. True, these short plays are more "human" than the late works, but they bear very little more relation to the men and women we know. Kaiser apparently believes that the closer he comes to the skeleton the more clearly can he perceive the soul. And occasionally he succeeds.

Above all, in *Die Bürger von Calais.* For once, I think, Georg Kaiser the human being forgot to strip his characters to the skeleton. In this magnificent play he has become passionately attached to people, and he has depicted men with whom ordinary mortals can sympathise. Generally, you regard a suicide or a murder in a Kaiser play merely as a turn in the psychological action, and nothing more: love, honor, bravery, self-sacrifice and such-like are to be regarded as quaint little oddities, sentimental illusions; as a rule they are not even amusing. But in the *Bürger* we have downright unashamed heroism and magniloquent rhetoric.

Six citizens must be chosen to go to the victorious King of England, who is encamped outside the walls of the doomed city of Calais. They are to deliver the keys of the town and submit to the will of the enemy. There are, however, seven volunteers, and various devices are tried to eliminate one of them. Finally, old Eustache de Saint-Pierre, the leader, kills himself in order that the remaining six shall be united. At the last moment the English herald announces an amnesty. But Saint-Pierre has not died in vain.

A chant glorifying the virtue of sacrifice. A struggle of words, hence the rhetoric, and yet—curiously—the words carry the drama, are indeed its essence.

The scenes of *Der Brand im Opernhaus* and *Das Frauenopfer* are likewise both laid in France. *Der Brand* is called a "Night-piece." It is penetrated with the blackness of night and illuminated with the flare of a conflagration. A broken-down nobleman has married a young orphan who knows nothing of the vicious life of Paris; she lives just outside the city of Paris in full view of that sink of iniquity. But Sylvette has secretly stolen out one night and is in the opera when it burns down. She runs in to her husband, crying "I am saved!" As a matter of fact, she is lost—as the nobleman's wife. The old man rushes out, makes his way to the smoking ruins of the opera and carries home the charred body of a woman. "This is my wife," he says. Henceforward Sylvette will remain with him, but only as his mistress: his wife is dead—she died in the sink of iniquity. There is pure Wede-

kind, the poet of nature, the idealist, the sentimentalist.

Das Frauenopfer is less conversational than the preceding two plays. And its symbolism is not so obvious as the symbolism in the *Brand Opernhaus*. It is the story of a wife who sacrifices herself for her husband. as in the *Bürger von Calais,* the victory is purely spiritual and won at the cost of life—a noble theme, treated in a far different manner, but with epic grandeur, by Joseph Conrad in his *Victory*.

I should like to speak of *Europa,* a philosophical song-and-dance, a pseudo-Greek satire, in which Kaiser, the apostle of Energy, preaches the gospel of the survival of the strongest. But this is at most a prologue to the characteristic works. These are *Die Koralle, Gas I, Gas II, Von Morgens bis Mitternachts, Hölle, Weg, Erde,* and *Noli me Tangere*. There are three other late plays—*Die Flucht nach Venedig, Kanzlist Krahler* and *Jeanne und Gilles,* but as these seem to announce the beginning of a new "period," I shall have little to say of them.

It is primarily because of the technique of the six characteristic plays just mentioned that Kaiser is often spoken of as an "Expressionist."

Now you may argue the question with half the critics of Europe and be little the wiser as to what precisely "Expressionism" is, for no one has yet succeeded in defining the form to the satisfaction of the Expressionists themselves. If you are a painter and instead of drawing the thing as you see it, draw your own impressions of what it might be, or rather what to you its soul seems to be—and in so doing produce a work unlike anything else before say 1916—you are probably an Expressionist. The Expressionist—this is generality in which most of them would concur—seeks not to represent, but to express the soul of the object or person before him, not bothering with the non-essentials visible to ordinary men. He will at all costs extract the inner meaning regardless of outward form. But this idea is by no means new, in spite of the combined statements of all the Expressionists of Europe. *Macbeth* is as Expressionistic—as far from "actuality" in form and words, especially words—as any play of Georg Kaiser or Ernst Toller or Arnolt Bronnen.

I prefer, then, not to bother with classifying or theorising about Kaiser's so-called Expressionistic plays. (By the way, one critic maintains that Kaiser's method is indubitably Cubistic!) What Kaiser has done is to effect a compression, a simplification, a synthesis of his materials. He writes a sort of shorthand, he sketches his characters and moves them not by ordinary motives but by what the logic of the theme demands. He takes from his men and women their sex, their identity, their frailties and peculiarities, and gets down to what he considers the essentials. Let us not quarrel with him until we perceive precisely what his aim may be.

These strange personages—hardly persons—are moved about in a rarefied atmosphere. At first you have no clear conception and why they move or whither they are moving; then the dramatist tells you, the theme is stated and you watch the puppets dance. When "The Billionaire" or "16" shoots himself or kills his fellow-man, or when

your nerves are racked by a terrific explosion, you scratch your head and say "Oh, yes, now I see." Emotional impulses are not required of you, and only afterward, when the whole canvas is before you, do you perceive the author's intention.

The horrible unreality, the remorseless cruelty, the meaningless antics of human skeletons, strikes you perhaps as having no relation to life; but that is only because you are too often accustomed to regard life from your seat in the theater. How pitiful that life now seems, the life that we are asked to consider night after night in most theatres. The horror you feel in seeing Kaiser's plays is the horror you would feel if you were simply a number or a "Man in Blue," an infinitismal cog in the machine of industry and modern business. No wonder you don't *feel* when you see *Die Koralle* or either of the *Gas* plays: what is death and destruction compared with world markets? What does one sentient human being amount to?

In the old days before the war Earnest Students of the Drama used to joke about the Tired Business Man who "checked his brains at the door." When you go to see a Kaiser play you check your heart. You go to *watch* the spectacle of the tragedy of the modern world, a tragedy in which the heart is not called upon to function.

Die Koralle, Gas I and *Gas II* form a trilogy. This trilogy is by all odds the finest achievement of Georg Kaiser. To read the three plays—they are not often performed, and I think never together—is to feel the impotence of man in the grip of the machines and systems he has himself erected for his own destruction. The characters—the pawns—designated simply as "The Billionaire," "The Man in Gray" and the like, are of course not free agents; they dance as the author wills them to dance, but you will bear in mind that Georg Kaiser is not only unwilling to allow them to work out their own destinies, he is unable to do so. He himself is no more than the blind force of that same Energy that has made modern civilization what it is. He is as relentless, as "inhuman" as a machine.

The Billionaire has begun life as the son of a workingman who in despair deserts his wife. The wife kills herself and the lad starts work. In time he conquers the factory that destroyed his youth and happiness. He has found a double, a secretary who so closely resembles him that the two can be distinguished only by a small watch-charm—the coral ("Koralle"). To the secretary he leaves all the work that will remind him of his terrible past. The Billionaire has a son and daughter whom he has tried to shield from everything that has embittered him, but both son and daughter, symbols of his own conscience, have become aware of the cost of their material benefits, and determine to devote their lives to the betterment of the poor and the downtrodden. The Billionaire is in despair, and turns to the secretary, whose childhood has been happy. *He* will become the secretary himself and kill the "Billionairbe," "taking over" the secretary's past. He therefore shoots his double, and maintains that he is the secretary. He is arrested and brought to trial, and his own son, believing that his life-work depends upon putting his father out of the way, confirms the father's state-

ments. The Billionaire is executed, having finally attained peace.

In *Gas I* the Billionaire's Son has himself grown to middle age. Gas has become the great motive-power of modern industry, and the old factory has been turned into a vast profit-sharing concern: the Son has lived up to his liberal theories. There are no strikes, and the manufacture of gas proceeds without interruption. But for some unaccountable reason one night the registers show that the gas is turning to a dark red and an explosion is imminent. There is a dance in progress within the "works" and the guests are hurried away, but before all the workingmen can escape the catastrophe occurs. Who is to blame? No one, and yet the blame must be fixed on someone. Everyone has done his duty, the Engineer who made the formula has made it according to scientifically exact calculations. And yet the men demand his dicharge, to which the Billionaire's son finally consents. At a mass meeting of the strikers the Engineer, however, appeals to the men, declaring that he will not only leave but will kill himself if only they will return to their posts, that the great work may proceed as before. This evidence of sincerity turns their wrath to admiration and they call upon him to lead them in the work of reconstruction. Meantime the Billionaire's Son has developed his philosophy beyond that of his fellow-workers and says that while the formula was correct and no human being was to blame for the explosion, there is another element which had not been taken into account: the entire system is wrong. Under the domination of the modern industrial system man is no longer a man, he is a slave—a slave to conditions, to the state, to the lust for gold. He will lead them to the new Canaan. Let us not re-build our factory, he tells them, let us plow up the land and make it into farms. A return to nature! But the workers are drunk with the desire for gain, and they heed only the materialistic dogmas of the Engineer. The Billionaire's Son calls in the state troops to protect his land—that has remained his own—but the state turns upon him and forces the men to begin reconstruction. The state needs power, to make weapons and ammunition; for the state is threatened with war. At the end, the Billionaire's Daughter comes to her defeated father. "Tell me," he asks her, "where is *Man?* . . . .When will he understand himself? *"I* will give birth to him," says the Daughter. Another step forward, perhaps, a faint glimmer of light on the horizon.

The new "Man" appears in *Gas II*, this time as the "Billionaire Worker." The factory, re-built, is unable to supply the demands for gas occasioned by a great war. The enemy is gradually pressing in from all sides. Some workingmen want peace, others are for continuing the struggle to the end. Once again, as *Gas I*, the men are called upon to decide between the materialism of an Engineer and the pacific idealism of the Billionaire Worker. And once again the Engineer wins the day: he has discovered poison gas. The idealist is powerless, his appeals to the masses begging them to "become men," are scoffed at. In despair he throws the little bomb of poison gas into the assembly. Destruction, death, the end—. And then a terrible voice as out of Reve-

lations: "The Day of Judgment—Dies irae—".

A nightmare, a kaleidoscope, swiftly moving pictures, voices crying out of the depths, pitiful puppets caught in the machine. How else is it possible to compress the thousand forces of the day into a couple of hundred pages—at most four or five hours on the stage of a theater? Human beings have disappeared, they count for so little, they are overwhelmed by forces they can scarcely perceive. Impotent men and women, without names—that is all. Digestive tubes labelled "Materialist", "Idealist", "Socialist", "Revolutionary"—these are Kaiser's people. Here we deal with millions, the nameless masses governed by greed, swayed by catch-words or superstition. Once in a while someone, a little less blind, gropes toward the light, and is promptly crucified.

Kaiser has discovered the means of bringing the world together within a single frame. Merely to have conceived a method of doing this is an accomplishment. It seems so easy, after the event, to say, "Of course, that's the only way it could be done!" And how has it been done? First, he has seen and felt the powers of business, of the law, of the race for gold, of industrial slavery; then he has submitted all his materials to a process of compression. The atmosphere is rarefied, the parts are separated, the steel and iron, glass and cement, together with the bits of humanity, are set up as one would set up a machine. Finally, the structure is flooded with light—radium, violet-rays, X-rays to show the skeleton. The machine stands complete, bereft of everything that cannot function: there is not an atom of decoration. And you look at it, not directly—you couldn't stand that—but through powerful refracting glasses.

Kaiser has attacked the multifarious life of his time by adopting the very means that have made it what it is. If he had not been a dramatist he might have been a steel king or an international war-making banker. Instead, he has captured the guns of the enemy and directed them againt him. In Kaiser we have a writer who is as powerful as a coal magnate, as merciless, as direct, as intelligent.

But Kaiser is something more than a fighter. I have perhaps over-emphasized the thesis or "tendenz" element in his plays; that is scarcely to be helped, as his ideas are not separable from his art. But that, I think, is a proof that his art is genuine. He has so identified himself with his day and generation that he cannot escape into the realm of the unrelated. If he has deemed it necessary to discard human beings as unimportant to his scheme, it was only in order that he might the more efectively show us humanity. He has lost something in the process—could it be otherwise?—but he has gained much. Like the Billionaire's Son, he is looking for Men, Men who Understand Themselves. He is an idealist.

Water Wheel to Mend

By MARK VAN DOREN

There have been times I thought these paddles moved
To music——when the water ceased to play
The axle would not answer with its groan;
The great spokes that swung in solemn circle
Would ponderously wait upon new tunes.
But water still is tumbling from the sluice,
And the splashed wheel is motionless. The stream
Foams out below with even a louder voice——
Calling upon the mighty arms to go.
They cannot go; the axle, old and deaf,
Is unaware this Spring of water sounding.

To an Ant

By LOUIS GILMORE

With hurt inferiority
And aching mandible
I watch you
Ant
Tug tree
Move mountain

Lend me your jaw
That I may rival Orpheus
Abash Mohammed

Reviews

NEW HAMPSHIRE

(New Hampshire, by Robert Frost. Henry Holt & Co., 1923)

MR. FROST has done a number of small lyrics and occasional lines and passages in longer pieces which prove him to be a good poet. But in his more ambitious work (owing to his espousal of the romantic theory that poetry is a matter of viewpoint, vision, subject or personality, rather than a fine art) Mr. Frost fails for the same reason that so interesting a person as Arnold Boecklin failed in painting. Boecklin, whose pictures have an uncanny charm of their own, a charm of subject matter, is not a good painter because he either couldn't or wouldn't paint well. Mr. Frost, who frequently advances surprising and beautiful conceptions, generally refuses to write verse well. It is a pity, because he could.

Mr. Frost's verse is too often thin. He is most famous for a certain drawling conversational inflection. This he works overtime, until, never beautiful, it becomes wearisome. (This drawl was used before him and is still used with better aesthetic effect by Edwin Arlington Robinson). As used by Mr. Frost, this movement owes its charm, when it is charming, not to intrinsic beauty, but to mimicry. It charms because it seems an echo of speech, not because it strikes us as a beautiful creation. Bemused by the sound of his own voice talking, Mr. Frost has written hundreds of lines of verse almost devoid of beauty.

This is extremely unfortunate because he is a poet with ideas. Many of his conceptions deserve to be encased in more beautiful form than he has troubled to give them. Few of his poems have a genuinely distinctive musical vitality. His studied subtlety is aesthetically vague, as much so-called free verse intended to be "subtle" in cadence is simply vague. The fine precision of excellent verse is generally lacking in Mr. Frost's work. Only now and then has he arrived at it.

If we view poetry as merely the expression of personality or of ideas, as we view bald prose, there is more to be said for the author of "New Hampshire." Mr. Frost probably would be a capital person to sit on a fence with, or smoke with, and listen to. He would (like so many people we meet unexpectedly in this world, in corner stores or hotels, saloons or salons) be charming. His perspective on life would interest us. His comments on things seen would often be delightful. We would enjoy the conversation and feel a personal satisfaction in having made his acquaintance. But most of us go to poetry for something more than this. (We expect a concert singer to sing well, however interesting his program; a painter to paint well, however unusual his subject matter.) We go to poetry for beauty of form as we go to the other arts. Mr. Frost does not often give us much of this.

There are a number of critics who

rate Mr. Frost as a great poet. These critics generally talk of his personality and of his chosen subject-matter, his ideas. Thus one speaks of "The Witch of Coos" as one of the best ghost-stories in English poetry, which it is, and of "A Star In a Stone-Boat" as a lovely chain of tercets, when—though the conception is beautiful—the tercets, with the exception of two or three, actually lack distinction. Another quotes Mr. Frost's opinions about the puking villagers. And so it goes.

It is my belief that American poetry has lost a great deal through Mr. Frost's preoccupation with subject-matter. As a result of this attitude to the most difficult of the fine arts, the bulk of his work is mediocre and tiresome. His poems are often very bad. His contribution to American literature —at any rate, to the art of poetry—is not great, but small. His work will go down like Whittier's and long be reverenced. As a personality he will become legendary—a charming New Englander, remembered and loved by those who have penetrated his barrier of long-winded verse to find him. But, this human documentation aside, considering poetry as a fine art and poems the sort of creations which interested Horace and the Romans, the Elizabethans, Milton, Heine and the modern Irishmen, we must consider Mr. Frost's actual output of poetry slight. A few fine lyrics and a somewhat larger number of poems of charming conception, in mediocre verse, but short enough to be read with pleasure for their ideas.

Among the best of the short poems, both included in "New Hampshire," are the two following:

NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY.

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

FIRE AND ICE.

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

The poet's whimsical vision is shown in "Gathering Leaves":

Spades take up leaves
No better than spoons,
And bags full of leaves
Are light as balloons.

I make a great noise
Of rustling all day
Like rabbit and deer
Running away.

But the mountains I raise
Elude my embrace,
Flowing over my arms
And into my face.

I may load and unload
Again and again
Till I fill the whole shed,
And what have I then?

Next to nothing for weight;
And since they grew duller
From contact with earth,
Next to nothing for color.

Next to nothing for use.
But a crop is a crop,
And who's to say where
The harvest shall stop?

There are a number of poems of charming conception in "New Hampshire." There are several of charming execution. The personality that is revealed in this book as in Mr. Frost's

earlier books is whimsical and pleasing and shrewd. The volume will be a delight to those who read poetry for its personal content. Those who read poetry because it is a fine art will find more than they ordinarily expect to find in a volume of American verse—but, after all that has been promised them by a flock of critics, they will be disappointed.

JOHN MCCLURE.

STEPHEN CRANE FINDS HIS BIOGRAPHER

(Stephen Crane, A Study in American Letters, by Thomas Beer. Alfred A. Knopf, 1923)

APART from its biographical significance, which is by no means slight, this is an excellent readable book; more readable, more fascinating to my temper than any fiction come upon during the past year. And this is not fiction, nor can it be classed arbitrarily as biography, it is more properly, just as Mr. Beer indicates, a study. But such a study as one rarely encounters at this date. Mr. Beer seems to have caught the spirit of the Crane complex remarkably well. He is comrade, he is friend, he is interpreter to his man. And quite sanely, unsentimentally—*en rapport.* There is a healthy pleasant vigor to his narrative—a nicety that discards the purely morbid and legendary, and at the same time preserves the color of romance.

Crane's short whirl on earth was intensely dramatic. The fourteenth and last child of a Methodist minister and a descendant of one Stephen Crane who signed the Declaration of Independence, after whom he was named, he evinced early an ineptitude to conform to the traditions not only of his family circle but also of the wider and, in a sense, narrower circle represented by the pompous gentlemen of the American nineties. Though slender and sparely built, not exactly the small boy type of his time, he yet entered into the games of the village youngsters with more than common zest. He appears, incredibly, to have been a horseman almost from the cradle and a town-lot ball player of some repute. At Lafayette College, where he remained a year, he played on the college nine; at Syracuse University he was captain of the team, and seriously considered an offer to join the professional ranks of baseballdom. But Crane began to have other plans. He wanted to write. Through the influence of his elder brother he managed while at Syracuse to form a connection with a New York paper. From this time on he was at it, taking up a residence in New York City with the determination to live by his pen. An act reminiscent of many besiegers and conquerors of the citadel by way of the Grub Streets of the world. Crane, though, was never a good reporter and could not hold a job for any length of time and the storming was made so much the harder.

The period from his leaving college until he was twenty-five, was one of struggles and failures. But Crane had a purpose and fastened to it with a sort of instinct that we would come through finally. His first sustained effort "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" belongs to these days. Seeking in vain to find a publisher for the story, he decided to print it on his own account and paid a religious publishing house "eight

hundred and sixty-nine dollars" for the privilege of getting it out in paper-back form without their imprint. Of course the book did not sell and was not actually published, in the sense of popular distribution, until after he had achieved recognition by his Civil War novel, "The Red Badge of Courage." This, his first, and properly speaking only, definite success (though not entirely definite at that) preluded four years of free-lance, swashbuckling, adventurous journalism with sporadic intervals of repose in rural England. At the end of this period he was dead, as the flesh goes, at twenty-nine.

When a man dies at twenty-nine or thereabouts and has produced something survivable and has lived recklessly or spectacularly or contrary to "the notions of his neighbors", he at once becomes first rate subject matter for literary hawks and buzzards, politely called biographers and critics. Shelley is an instance. I have not investigated, but I dare say that the private life of the "ineffectual angel" has had as many self-appointed traducers and apologists as the number of months he spent on this planet. But unlike Shelley with his multi-memorists, Crane is very fortunate in his lone biographer. Thomas Beer has done more than justice to his subject and, as far as I can see, no injustice.

In his appendix to the book Mr. Beer, with sly gravity, states: "I have, with regret, rejected the tales of Crane's love affair with the lamented Sarah Bernhardt, of his duel in New Orleans, of his attempt to burn James Gordon Bennett's yacht, of his marriage to Australian, English, Spanish and African dancers, of the ninety thousand dollar cablegram to the *New York Journal*, of his death of delirium tremens in Paris and of his murder by an actress still living who happened at the time of his death to be in Chicago." Before this Mr. Beer, in acknowledging his indebtedness to Mr. Willis Clarke for various data furnished, remarks: "The mythology encountered by Mr. Clarke may interest readers who have been struck by a note of apology in this most imperfect study. Mr. Clarke was informed by people who had met Crane and admired him that he was the illegitimate son of Grover Cleveland, the outcast child of an eminent family in New York, an Australian sailor, a German actor and an ex-convict."

What preposterous ghouls a man's acquaintances may become after his interment is clearly demonstrated here. One cannot but admire Mr. Beer for his wholesome sanity in the face of such absurd legends. What would have been a difficult task in the hands of a professional exposer of dead men's lives becomes with him a pleasant, sparkling, clear-visioned picture of the last decade of the last century and of a young man out of time and running ahead of his sickly contemporaries.

One has almost forgotten on closing this book that he has dutifully plowed through a "lengthy introduction" as advertised on the jacket, by the solemn Pole who is England's master stylist. Mr. Conrad, in his involved studied manner gives us a tea-party picture of "Stevie" that belongs to the class of reminiscences made popular by Mrs. Margot Asquith. Summed up "Stephen Crane, A Study in American Letters" is a terse racy narrative shot through with sapient observations on the Ameri-

can scene in the pink nineties. I hazard the prediction that Mr. Beer will exert an influence on the rising generation of young biographers very like that which Crane's writings exerted over the "expressionistic" school that followed him.

BASIL THOMPSON.

THE HIGH PLACE

(The High Place, by James Branch Cabell, Robert McBride & Co., 1923)

IN writing of any new book by Mr. Cabell it is necessary to say we speak of an author who demands comparison with the best of all times. We must remember, too, or rather we cannot forget that he is the author of "Jurgen", a book which dazzled us into ecstatics on first reading and still leaves us bewildered and admiring.

In this blinding light "The High Place" shows up a rather mediocre repetition of "Jurgen" and "Figures of Earth" with highly amusing passages done in good Cabellian sarcasm. There is evidence, however, that prosperity has somewhat marred the fine edge of the author's self-criticism. In this book he cracks a number of smutty puns much in the manner of any pubescent wit. Also he kills off his characters like beeves in a slaughter house to no purpose. And, to my taste at least, his larmoyant snufflings over spent lives and loves is tiresome, where it is not downright ridiculous. Mechanics such as the following are commencing to fatigue: " 'I here set up,' said Janicot, 'a nithing post'...He waited for a moment. He was entirely brown; about him lilies bloomed with a surprising splendor of white and gold; and the flowering at his feet was more red than blood...

"He moved the stake so that the horse's head now faced the east and Janicot said: 'I send a witlessness upon them from this nithing post...I who am what I am have turned the post... A thing done has an end." With all respect—hokum, unadulterated.

There is, however, good fun in "The High Place" at the expense of conventional religion and current theology. For one who has read none of his previous books "The High Place" should be a treat. Yet it lacks the sweep and grandeur of "Jurgen" and on the whole of "Figures of Earth" not to name the incomparable beauty of parts in "The Cream of the Jest."

Mr. James Branch Cabell is in danger of taking his heroes too seriously. The geneology of the Puysanges is a thing which he cannot expect his readers to be as impressed by as he himself undoubtedly is. Moreover the stock seems to be depreciating. For whereas Jurgen was a pawnbroker who married for money and was afraid of being alone in a cave, and Manuel, a swineherd, who blundered into prominence, Florian de Puysange is as dauntless a hero as ever came out of the Mabinogeon or the Morte d'Arthur.

The question remains, has Mr. Cabell anything more to say? At least it seems safe to state that he has done his Poictesme to a turn; and he should give his furiously sexual males a well-earned rest.

JULIUS W. FRIEND.

GOHA THE FOOL

(Goha the Fool, by Albert Ades and Albert Josipovici. Translated by Morris Colman. Lieben & Lewis, 1923)

MUCH has been said of late about the sex novel in America. Here is a foreign novel which sheds some light on our problem. It is impossible not to compare such a novel with the drivel which has been coming from our presses in the past several years. Our novels treat sex either as something licentious or as something painful and tortuous, depending upon whether the author happens to be a sly master of popular appeal or an iconoclastic young high-brow. In either case sex as an ordinary phenomenon of life hardly ever receives an expression.

In this work by two young Egyptians, written in French and translated into colorful English by Mr. Colman, we have a novel with sheiks, sheikas, harems, the streets of Cairo, the sands of the desert, and all the paraphernalia of a popular story, but what sincerity of both conception and execution! What simplicity and brilliance at the same time! There is no pain, no torturing analysis in the portrayal of the simple experiences of the people. Only one object is apparent: to give us a picture of the East and of the group of people whose lives run through these pages. There is all the charm of the color and mysticism of Islam. There is the strangeness, the piety, the ugliness, the beauty of an old people, and the pulse of their elemental emotions, above all there is a good story, not a trace of a thesis anywhere.

The story of Goha the fool is the simple narrative of an idiot's life and adventures in the city of Cairo. Having no conception of time relationships Goha is governed entirely by his instincts, the instincts of the moment. The diseases of intellect, of analysis and counter-analysis and psychic analysis, from which the Occidental suffers are absent in this simpleton. Naturally, he is despised by the normal-minded members of his own family as well as by the proud, righteous citizens of his home town. He becomes a legendary figure, a symbol of stupidity—Goha the Fool. And yet the learned Sheik al-Zaki, so versed in the law of the Koran, sometimes envies the simple happiness of Goha, the son of Mahmoud, for, as he puts it, "the soul of this idiot is pure," and he seems to dwell in the world from which the sane people are forever excluded. Goha's visions are obscure to himself. Goha's loves have no connection, one with another, his adorations are causeless, mysteriously arising from some inner need. Each of his experiences is unique having no precedent in his conscious life. Everything is a law unto itself, an emanation of the moment. There is no clock ticking the expiration of life.

I have not attempted to compare the translation with the original. Is literature really a matter of scholarship? The book in its translated form has a sensuous grip which is unmistakable. Doubtlessly the authors have learned something from the French writers, and the translator has caught the spirit. For some reason or other this study of a fool has made me think of the monumental study of a genius, "Jean Christophe." Both have the genuine artlessness of great art. The

book also brings to mind Gautier and, in spots, the naturalistic Zola. In one or two places the translator gives the impression that he has not quite found the equivalent in English idiom of an elusive phrase or passage, but on the whole the work is remarkably well done. If Octave Mirbeau was moved to say in his preface, that for the sake of the public he wished this book success, what should an American say? 'The poor public, distracted by the literary overproduction of our day—this public consciously bewildered by popular authors." In our world of cheap novels the production of a "Goha the Fool" would be almost a miracle. It has art minus strutting, brilliance minus cleverness, philosophy, minus shallowness, sex minus consciousness, and, above all, placidity minus stagnation.

N. BRYLLION FAGIN.

GELATINES AND JUPES

(Harmonium, by Wallace Stevens. Alfred A. Knopf, 1923)

MR. Stevens first published in a magazine ten years ago, but this is his is his first collected book of verse. It reveals a rare personality and an exquisite artist.

The supreme question about a work of art is out of how deep a life does it spring—(James Joyce.) Mr. Stevens' poetry is a poetry not of depths but of surfaces: not a geyser erupting from a bowel of the earth but a fountain with colored lights jetting from a reservoir.

But if he is not a great poet, Mr. Stevens is, at any rate, a wholly original and delightful one. He is a poet for poets—by which I mean that only those who are interested in poetry as poetry will enjoy reading him. There is no human interest as distinguished from art interest in this poetry; and whatever emotion it contains is so intellectualized as to be no longer recognizable as emotion. Its obvious characteristics are exotic coloring—brilliant rather than sensuous; and preciosity:

> Thridding the squawkiest jungle
> In a golden sedan
> White dogs at bay.

At its best, it is remarkable for wit, precision of phrase and image and subtle grace of cadence:

> But not on a shell, she starts,
> Archaic, for the sea.
> But on the first-found weed
> She scuds the glitters,
> Noiselessly, like one more wave.

Or

> To what good, in the alleys of the lilacs,
> O caliper, do you scratch your buttocks
> And tell the divine ingénue, your companion,
> That this bloom is the bloom of soap
> And this fragrance the fragrance of vegetal?

Mr. Stevens is eminently quotable: there are, at least, a dozen poems in the volume that I should like to quote entire —Invective Against Swans, The Paltry Nude Starts on a Spring Voyage, The Snow Man, The Lord of Sugar-Cane, Hibiscus on the Sleeping Shores, Homunculus et La Belle Etoile, Last Looks at the Lilacs, Floral Decorations for Bananas, Banal Sojourn, Cortége for Rosenbloom, The Bird with the Coppery, Keen Claws, Nomad Exquisite —titles which are in themselves poems; and which, were I without a copy of Harmonium, would incite me to purchase or borrow one.

A reading of the list of Contents discloses what is, perhaps, Mr. Stevens' pre-eminent gift—the gift of phrase-making. There is scarcely a page in the volume without its shining phrase; and many of the pages, notably in the autobiographical The Comedian as the Letter C, are studded with them: An eye most apt in gelatines and jupes; That century of wind in a single puff; Crispin, the lutanist of fleas; The old age of watery realist; Sonorous nutshells rattling inwardly; etc; etc.

There are a few poems in the volume which seem to me to belong to an earlier, uncertain period. Domination of Black, Anecdote of Men by the Thousand, The Silver Plough-Boy, Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock, Six Significant Landscapes, Tea, Tatoo, Life is Motion, Depression Before Dawn, The Wind Shifts, and a few others are either a little strident or a little arid.

LOUIS GILMORE.

JANET MARCH

(Janet March, by Floyd Dell. Alfred A. Knopf, 1923)

MR. DELL has done it. He has written the book that every sophomore has promised himself that he would one day write, the whole truth about *this sex business*. Moreover the job is workmanlike and thorough without a trace of distinction to mar the volume. One wanders drearily through these pages wondering why publishers consider this sort of puerility worthy of electrotype.

Janet March, Mr. Dell's dream of fair woman grows up according to formula: puppy love affairs, vague longings for a job in a business office, with the final bestowal of herself on a young aesthete one afternoon, in a ludicrously casual fashion, that inspires Mr. Dell to lyricism, but reminds the reader of nothing so much as the preface to "What Every Young Girl Should Know." The author is suffering from the Y. M. C. A. complex which infests literary America like a pestilence, namely the desire to idealize and make beautiful the sexual act in itself. But the trick cannot be turned; braver men than Mr. Dell have tried and failed. The thing is either burlesque as in the "Heptameron" or sentimental physiology as in "Janet March." Lyricism never gets beyond the sonnets of Michael Angelo or Shakespeare, neither of which brought blushes to maidenly cheeks in the eighties.

Roger, the hero is the slightly literary prig we have been led to expect in modern novels who has been looking for his ideal through several drab affairs and finally gives up in despair and runs a book shop. When Janet turns his way he is forty odd and "his hair is turning," but he is as fine a prig as ever. He and Janet live together in approved Greenwich Village style, until she announces the expectance of her child. They become engaged on the spot and the book closes on this obstetrical note.

Now if we consult the learned authorities on art with a capital A, we find that nearly all agree in slurring subject matter and stressing perfection of performance. Subject matter aside the book is as interesting as a seed catalog. For ecstasy, that sine qua non of literature, you will look in vain. Style is non-existent

in any intelligent definition of the word. It is evident that Mr. Floyd Dell is impatient of all these qualities. It is life he is writing about and the modern spirit as idealized in Janet, the courage, the honesty of the lady. Analysing her conduct we discover that she kicks over barrier no. 7 and has an illegal operation; kicks over barrier no. 7 again and marries her kicking partner. Not so different from the history of many unfortunates who have not had the advantages of Greenwich Village philosophy. If this be courage and honesty, I prefer cowardice and deceit. But enough of this. I give Mr. Dell due credit for sincerity in acceptance of the facts of life; sigh, lock the door and take down "Idylls of the King."

JULIUS W. FRIEND.

Tadpoles

By LAURA BENET

Tadpoles, like the elect
Do flower late.
Tails, long dividing
Greatly fascinate;
Parcel and part with horns
Of devils, whence they're taken;
Frogs consummated
But the mystery shaken!